

## Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-09 ISO-00 /022 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/SOV:WKUSHLIS:AJ

APPROVED BY EUR/SOV:SMCCALL

EA/PRCM:RMCMAHON

----- 084138

O R 032341Z NOV 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

USLO PEKING

UNCLAS STATE 271065

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UR, CH

SUBJECT: ANOTHER VIKTOR LOUIS ARTICLE ON CHINA

REF: A. MOSCOW 17265; B. LONDON 17713

1. FYI FOLLOWING IS FBIS TRANSLATION OF VIKTOR LOUIS ARTICLE, APPEARING IN FRANCE SOIR OCTOBER 31/NOVEMBER 1, UNDER TITLE "MOSCOW WANTS TO 'FORCE' DETENTE WITH PEKING."

2. QUOTE: BLAGOVESHCHENSK (THE SINO-SOVIET BORDER), 30 OCTOBER--THE SOVIET UNION IS PREPARED TO REESTABLISH GOOD RELATIONS WITH PEOPLE'S CHINA. THAT IS THE MEANING OF THE MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS WHICH MR. BREZHNEV HAS SENT TO HUA KUO-FENG, THE NEW CHIEF OF THE CCP.

BUT THE SOVIETS WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT HIM; THEY BELIEVE THAT IT IS NOW UP TO PEKING TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP.

THE SINO-SOVIET BORDER HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN EXCELLENT BAROMETER OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN CHINA AND THE USSR. I WENT THERE IN ORDER TO SEE IF THERE WERE ANY SIGNS OF CHANGE IN  
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THE AIR. MY LAST VISIT TO THE REGION WAS LAST YEAR. AND

IN FACT I WAS ABLE TO NOTE SOME EVOLUTION.

THE TRACTS HAVE DISAPPEARED

STANDING ON THE BANK OF THE AMUR RIVER WHICH FORMS THE BORDER BETWEEN THE USSR AND CHINA, IN THE TOWN OF BLAGOVESHCHENSK, I NOTICED THAT THE SLOGANS PAINTED ON THE HOUSES OF THE CHINESE TOWN OF AI-HUI ON THE OTHER BANK HAD BEEN REMOVED. THE OLD CHINESE PADDLE BOAT, WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE COME STRAIGHT FROM DISNEYLAND, CAME DOWNSTREAM AS IT DOES EVERY DAY. BUT I COULDN'T BELIEVE MY EYES WHEN I SAW THE PASSENGERS MAKE FRIENDLY GESTURES TO A RUSSIAN BOAT THEY WERE PASSING.

AT BLAGOVESHCHENSK, THE SOVIET BORDER AUTHORITIES TOLD ME THAT THE CHINESE SAILORS WERE DISPLAYING, IN CONTRAST TO THE PAST, COURTESY AND RESPECT FOR THE RULES OF NAVIGATION WHICH THEY HAD LONG DISREGARDED.

AT THE BORDER STATION OF GRODEKOVO, WHERE THE SOVIET RAILROAD JOINS THE CHINESE NETWORK, CHINESE FOREIGN TRADE OFFICIALS HAVE PAID A COURTESY VISIT TO THE CUSTOMS SERVICE. THEY CHATTED WITH THE RUSSIAN OFFICIALS; AND SOME OF THEM EVEN ACCEPTED A GLASS OF VODKA.

IN THE NEIGHBORING CHINESE STATION, THE SOVIET RAILROAD MEN WERE SURPRISED NOT TO SEE THE USUAL PILES OF PROPAGANDA JOURNALS ON THE TABLES. ALL THE ANTI-SOVIET TRACTS HAD DISAPPEARED.

MY OLD FRIEND LI, WHO HAS LIVED IN BLAGOVESHCHENSK SINCE 1945, HAS BEEN WAITING FOR YEARS FOR THE SITUATION TO IMPROVE TO VISIT HIS FAMILY IN CHINA. HE HAS BEEN MORE OPTIMISTIC SINCE HE REALIZED THAT THE TONE OF THE CHINESE RADIO BROADCASTS HAD CHANGED.

THE FIRST ICE FORMED ON THE AMUR ON 26 OCTOBER. THE INHABITANTS ARE WAITING IMPATIENTLY FOR THE SHEET TO BE THICK ENOUGH FOR THEM TO CROSS. A SPECIAL BORDER LINE WITH MILITARY GUARDS WAS SET UP A FEW YEARS AGO. THEY

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BELIEVE THEY CAN CROSS IT.

THIS ATTITUDE WILL CERTAINLY NOT PLEASE THE UNITED STATES. IN KISSINGER'S OPINION, A RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN THE USSR AND CHINA IS NOT IN THE UNITED STATES' INTERESTS. WHEN I MET THE U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE HE GAVE ME THE IMPRESSION OF A MAN DETERMINED TO CARRY OUT HIS PLANS. HE IS NOT THE ONLY ONE.

IF MY COLLEAGUES ON PRAVDA HAD ASKED MY OPINION, I WOULD  
HAVE TOLD THEM NOT TO REPLY TO KISSINGER. (VICTOR LOUIS  
IS REFERRING HERE TO KISSINGER'S RECENT STATEMENT THAT THE  
UNITED STATES WOULD NOT TAKE AN ATTACK ON CHINA LIGHTLY.)

IN ANY CASE THE SECRETARY OF STATE DID NOT SAY ANYTHING  
NEW. HE IS A SKILLFUL STATESMAN WHO IS SOMETIMES ABLE TO  
DEMONSTRATE FRANKNESS AND MUST BE ADMIRER FOR HIS TENACITY.

HOWEVER THIS MAY BE, THINGS CAN CHANGE FASTER THAN YOU  
THINK. AS I PREDICTED, IT HAS TAKEN LESS THAN A MONTH--  
AS FAR AS I CAN ASSESS--FOR A CERTAIN CHANGE TO APPEAR IN  
SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS. END QUOTE. KISSINGER

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS COMMENTS, FOREIGN RELATIONS, JOURNALISTS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 03 NOV 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** n/a  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
**Disposition Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976STATE271065  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** WKUSHLIS:AJ  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760410-1068  
**From:** STATE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19761184/aaaacuux.tel  
**Line Count:** 129  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ORIGIN EUR  
**Original Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 76 MOSCOW 17265, 76 LONDON 17713  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** oatisao  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 29 APR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <29 APR 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <16 AUG 2004 by oatisao>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** ANOTHER VIKTOR LOUIS ARTICLE ON CHINA  
**TAGS:** PFOR, UR, CH, (LOUIS, VIKTOR)  
**To:** MOSCOW  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006